

## Vegas, Baby by hoppnhorn

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**Summary:**

After being in prison for five years, Billy Hargrove has business in Vegas.

## Vegas, Baby

### Author's Note:

Just call me Captain Hop, "AUs? I LOVE AUs,  
DRINKS ALL AROUND!" pff. Enjoy!

It's been a long fucking time.

Five years actually. Could have been worse. He could have been caught starting that fight in the cafeteria three months ago. But he wasn't. No, Billy is too smart to get caught. Except...well maybe he gets caught sometimes.

Like when he'd stolen some tribal masks and got caught trying to drive them across state lines in a stolen truck.

Yeah, so maybe he gets caught.

But only once in a while.

They don't catch him violating his parole within thirteen minutes of being released from prison. He was in the front seat of a stolen car and on his way out of town minutes after they opened the gates because fuck Utah. He has business in Nevada.

Business that he's been missing. For five years.

It takes him a couple of days to clean himself up and get what he needs, but Billy finds what he's looking for soon enough. He finds out where he needs to be without issue. It's a bar on the Vegas strip, where celebrities go to throw money at each other and lose to the *real* sharks who work the tables. The place is thoroughly predictable. The celebrities are the main event out front, cameras flashing as names like Bradley Cooper and Elijah Wood stop to sign a few autographs, grin wide for the photos. But around back there is a second entrance. The one used by the actual players, the ones that take the game so seriously, it's their job.

Billy gets in the back without even a question. He looks the part. He is the part. Then he's prowling the bar floor looking for a single face.

One in a sea of hundreds.

When Billy finds him, something inside his body goes slack, like he's been holding something tense for years. He stands there for a moment, staring across the room like some awestruck idiot.

*Steve.*

The guy hasn't changed at all. In fact, he looks like a mirage, a living memory projected into being to haunt him. But Billy knows he's real; he can tell by the way Steve is laughing, eyes slipping from his cards to the guy beside him. He's checking his neighbor's hand, then he's pointing to the table. The player nods and tosses out chips, making a bet.

Billy watches with a smirk as all the other players follow suit. He should know who they are, he realizes. Their faces are all familiar. Like he's seen them on posters or tv screens. But here, they're just chum in the water. He waits, though his hands are shaking to cross the room and reach out and touch. But he doesn't. He's waited five years.

What's another five minutes?

Steve is wearing a white suit, which is just *typical*. He goes against the endless black worn by everyone in the room so that he stands out like a lily among flies. His long mane of brown hair is pushed back, the length curling under to tuck neatly behind his ears. Billy grins. He's been growing it, but not too much. Not too long. Hair like that gets out of hand at a point. Steve is all about control.

Billy is the one with impulse issues.

He orders a whiskey from a waitress and is halfway through the glass when he sees Steve stand and leave the table for the bar. Billy makes his move. Walking through the mob of bodies, he slinks up close, his pulse in his ears when he gets near. He can hear his voice order a *whiskey neat*. He can smell his cologne. The scent knocks the wind out of Billy and he shoots away, body vibrating with awareness.

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Steve is goddamn bored. He's bored of Nevada. He's bored of Vegas and rat pack music and the jingle of slot machines. He's bored of mopping up each night with a tidy couple grand or so in his pocket.

Sipping an overpriced glass of whiskey at the bar, he stares at the beautiful woman dancing on the table behind the bartender. There was a time where he would have sat and watched for quite some time, let his eyes wander. Now, he is just bored.

He is especially bored of the table full of idiots he's teaching to play poker.

They are lousy card players. Each and every one of them. Yet they keep coming back, keep asking how to be *real players* in the great city of Las Vegas. Steve wants to tell them to stick to their day jobs. The only thing the pretty faces at his table can manage is just that. Looking pretty. And sometimes they can act.

Still up for debate, in his opinion.

He thanks the bartender and slides a single bill over the counter, hoping that the guy will remember his face and maybe get to him faster next time. But he doesn't hold his breath. Making his way back to the table, he gathers the professionalism he needs to get back into the game.

When he gets there, all of his composure goes out the window.

Sitting in his seat, smug and sleek and *beaming* is Billy. Billy Hargrove. Thief and asshole.

Steve blinks, his glass sweating in his palm as he just *looks*. He's wearing a dark blue suit, and it fits him *well*, highlighting his wide shoulders and flat stomach. He didn't go away looking like that, Steve thinks. Apparently prison does wonders for one's pectorals. Billy's blond hair is trimmed to his skull on the sides and long on the top, letting just enough curl free to remind Steve of when it had once cascaded down past his ears. His eyes, however, are the same. Blue and keen and bold.

"Hey, Steve, hope you don't mind..." One of the boneheads is talking

to him, motioning with a cigar towards Billy. "We got another player. That cool man?"

Steve nods.

"Yeah. It's fine."

He sits in an empty chair, his gaze still locked on Billy like if he blinks the guy might up and vanish.

"How you been, Steve?" Billy's voice is like warm honey and it oozes into Steve through every pore. He takes a drink of his whiskey to mask the shudder that runs down his spine.

"Better than you, Billy. I'm guessing." He sets his glass down and picks up the cards as they're dealt. "How was prison?"

The table goes still as four pairs of eyes turn to settle on Billy. He smirks and leans back in his seat.

"As good as prison gets, I guess."

"Whoa, Billy, you went to prison?" One of the younger actors, a kid with curly hair and a name Steve always forgets, pipes up. "What'd you do, man?"

"I steal things." Billy replies evenly, his eyes still locked on Steve's face. "Expensive things."

"Like what?" Another one of the players asks, an actress with big puppy-dog eyes.

"Incan Tribal Masks." Steve answers, his voice a little harder than he intends.

"Is there money in that?" Another actor, equally as dumb as the others.

"There's a bit." Billy quips.

"There's a lot." Steve adds with a slant of his eyebrow. "If you have a good fence."

“A fence?” The actress asks, leaning forward over the table until Steve can see down her cleavage. She thinks it distracts him when she’s bluffing. It doesn’t.

“Someone to move them. No fence. No money. And you wind up holding a truck-load of stolen shit you can’t move.” Steve explains, while he stares at his cards like they’re absolutely *fascinating*.

“Like Incan Tribal Masks?” The curly haired actor catches on. An uncomfortable silence stretches thin around the table and Steve chances a glance up at Billy.

“Let’s just say I’ve learned my lesson.” He purrs across the table.

“Don’t steal?” The actress jokes, which earns her a chorus of laughs from her fellow idiots. Steve stares down at his cards and refuses to look up.

“When your partner says no, don’t go.”

They play three hands and Billy mops the floor with them, all except Steve. He folds. All three times. Eventually the expense starts to outweigh the novelty of the game and their table decides to call it a night. Steve anticipates what happens next like clockwork.

Walking towards the back exit, he feels a hand on the small of his back. He doesn’t need to turn to see whose it is. He doesn’t need to ask what Billy thinks he’s doing. This is a song to which he knows every note. A dance he knows every step. They walk side by side down the back hallway, in utter silence, before they break through the back door and out into an alley.

“You look good.” Steve says offhand into the chilly night air, glancing up at the black sky. Billy doesn’t answer. Instead, he grabs him by the back of his collar and tugs him into the shadows. Steve’s back meets the cement wall in a muted thump and he’s opening his mouth to accept Billy’s kiss in a desperate gasp.

Billy tastes like whiskey and cinnamon and his lips are warm and wet and soft. Five years of pent up anger and loneliness dissolve in a

moment, Steve's heart skipping wildly in his chest. He's close to tears, he realizes, as a ragged sigh escapes his lips.

Billy pulls away to press their foreheads together, his eyes so goddamn bright.

"I'm sorry."

"I fucking hate you." Steve groans. "I hate you so goddamn much."

"I know." Billy snares his mouth in another rough kiss and it's all teeth and tongue as Steve makes a mess of Billy's collar with his hands, tugging on the material like he's trying to rip it apart. They come up for air again and he's panting.

"I told you. Goddamn you, I *told* you."

"I know, you did. I'm sorry."

"It stunk, Billy. I told you that job smelled like a setup."

"Steve, how many times—"

"AS MANY TIMES AS I NEED TO HEAR IT." His voice cracks as he slumps back against the wall, throat working as he swallows down a sob. Billy nods. Once. Twice.

"Okay."

"I hate you." Steve says pathetically, eyes closed to *keep the tears in*. "The papers said fifteen years—"

"I was a good boy." Billy interrupts with a dazzling smile. A smile Steve *aches* to see over and over.

"Fifteen years, you asshole." Steve hisses. "I sat in that goddamn courtroom and heard them say *fifteen years* and I couldn't fucking think."

"I'm sorry." Billy ducks his head and plants a feather light kiss to Steve's lips. "I'm sorry." He repeats the kiss on Steve's cheek. "I'm sorry."

"I. Hate. You." Steve murmurs, eyes falling closed with each soft brush of Billy's lips.

"I'm so sorry." Billy's mouth travels lower, his kiss opening until his tongue is flicking out to touch the surface of Steve's throat. "I'm sorry."

"Fuck you." Steve breathes.

"I'm sorry." The kisses turn harsher, teeth nipping at the fine skin of Steve's collarbone. "I'm so sorry, baby."

*Baby* . Steve relents and grabs a handful of Billy's hair, yanking him up so he can crash their mouths together. He drowns in the pain of losing him and he soars at the joy of having him back. Their bodies flatten against the wall, legs tangled as they join as one, writhing mess in the dark.

"I hate you." Steve let's the tears fall, his cheeks damp when Billy takes a hold of them in both palms. "Fuck, I hate you."

"I missed you too, baby. I missed you too."